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- 12.—*A Geography for Beginners.* By the REV. K. J. STEWART. Palmetto Series. Illustrated with Maps and Engravings. Richmond, Va.: J. W. Randolph. 1864. pp. 223.

THIS is a small volume of some two hundred pages, published in England, and destined, like the rest of the "Palmetto Series," to serve as a text-book for the schools of the Southern Confederacy. The printing, paper, and maps are good, and the wood-cuts, on the whole, as fair as are usually seen, and perhaps as true to nature as can be expected in a school-book of this sort. The geographical facts, the dimensions, population, mountains, rivers, and lakes of the different countries of the world are mentioned, and treated in much the same way in which these subjects have been handled by Mitchell or Cornell. It is true that the inhabitants of the United States are stated as numbering 13,000,000; but considering the origin of the book and the object of its publication, it is rather to be wondered at that this and a subsequent misstatement with regard to the cause of the late war are the only glaring falsehoods contained in it with reference to this country. The second misstatement to which we refer is the following paragraph, which occurs on page 200: "In the year 1861, the Federal Government of these States, elected by a sectional minority of 1,700,000 (out of a total vote of 5,000,000), attempted to subjugate the Southern States by military occupation. This occasioned the final separation of those States, and the formation of 'the Confederate States of America' as an independent government." In the list of Presidents just preceding these sentences the name of Abraham Lincoln is omitted. Is this because Mr. Stewart recoiled from the thought of forming with his own patriotic hand the letters which make up the name of that man whose principles embodied all that was hostile to the cause for which he wrote, or did he, with so many others, really think that the United States had ceased to exist on the secession of the Rebels, and that by conquest or compromise the Federal Government would merge in the Confederate? Perhaps the latter was the reason; and although the recollection appears laughable now, would it not be well to remember — will it ever be well to forget — that people who held such opinions were not without numbers and influence only a few months ago, — that, though their influence to do us harm in this particular direction is almost, if not entirely, gone, the spirit that possessed them remains, ready to marshal them against the true interests and principles of America whenever opportunity offers?

This "Geography for Beginners" is chiefly valuable as a curiosity in politics and religion. The character of the author's political state-

ments with regard to his own country is marked by that skilful distortion of facts which the progress of the world in morality, and the increased inconvenience of downright lying caused by the general use of the printing-press, have forced upon those who commit and those who defend unjust public acts. A good instance of this sort is contained in an abstract of the history of Virginia on page 40, in the course of which he says: "When Virginia adopted the Federal Constitution of the United States, in 1788, the Commissioners of the State were directed to annex the condition and reservation of the right to withdraw from the federation at will. In the exercise of this reserved right, Virginia withdrew from the United States in the year 1861." That is to say, they did not reserve it, therefore they had it. One cannot help being reminded, in reading some of the arguments made use of by the Southerners during the Rebellion, of the old fallacy, "It rains, or it does not rain; it does not rain, therefore it rains." Again, on page 41: "The first collision of the war for independence of the Southern States occurred at Charleston in the spring of 1861, and was occasioned by the President, elected by citizens of the Northern States, attempting to seize, provision, and occupy the forts in Charleston harbor, and turn their guns upon the city they were designed to protect."

But the author, having dwelt at length on the productions, fauna, flora, and manufactures of the Confederate States, passes to the consideration of the British Empire, in which he tells us that "the Crown derives its authority from the acknowledged Supreme Ruler of the Universe by Divine right," and that "the Common Law of Great Britain is a model of just and equitable legislation, embodied from the great principles of the Book of Leviticus." There have been a great many severe things said of the Common Law, but never before, we believe, has an accusation so severe been brought against it, as that it embodied the principles of the Book of Leviticus. Crossing the Channel, France is next described; and though the Emperor is not stated to have derived his title directly from God, Mr. Stewart evinces such a loyal veneration for all authority of an imperial and regal nature, as to make it hardly possible to doubt he considers the Prince imperial at least to have been sent into the world by Divine interposition, lest the line of "the brave general, the humane and wise governor and sagacious statesman," should become extinct.

But if this description of the earth's surface has its political tint to suit the tendencies of those whom it was to educate, what shall we say of the varnish of religion that covers the whole picture? The author had no need to write *Rev.* before his name; his calling is sufficiently vouched for in the text of his book. There are so many allusions to

the necessity of a dependence on God, so many subtle questions of ethics raised, as almost to leave it doubtful whether Mr. Stewart intended to make Religion the handmaid of Geography, or *vice versa*; as in a moral pocket-handkerchief it is difficult to say which is chiefly aimed at,—moral or physical relief. The “geography” of Palestine furnishes a marked instance of this needless and impertinent confusion of two entirely distinct subjects. Here we have perhaps a dozen lines of description, while two pages are devoted to the religious history of the country, with quotations from the Bible, and reasons why, by Christian, Jew, and Mohammedan, this land should be regarded with peculiar veneration. The following are some of the questions at the end of this section: “Which is the most interesting of all lands? Why? Is Palestine older than Great Britain? Why does the Jew venerate it? Were the Jews ever a populous and wealthy nation? When? Is God able to restore them to their own land? Who says that he is? How do Christians regard this land? Why? *Who was Christ? What did he do? Why?* From what place did he ascend? Will he ever return? For what purpose? Where does Mohammed say the judgment will take place? Is Mohammedanism true? Is it mixed with truth?” Again, *apropos* of the fauna of the Confederate States, the juvenile Rebel was to give answers on the following points. “Is it cruel in the Almighty to permit them (falcons) to tear a living victim, and eat it? Who says ‘the whole creation travaileth together in pain’?” Would it be cruel for man to add to the sufferings of animals? Has man a right to crush worms to death when he digs in his garden? Has he a right to catch a fish with a hook? *Did one of the Apostles catch a fish with a hook? Which?* Have you a right wantonly to destroy animal life? To make them suffer for your amusement? Is it noble, or ignoble, to do so? What is the difference between *barbarian* and *gentleman*?

The “Palmetto Series” will probably never have a great sale; the nation for whose use it was designed has ceased to be; and it might perhaps seem hardly worth while to notice a book which is unlikely to do any harm. But besides being a curiosity in one view, it is well that it should be held up to scorn. That mawkish sentimentalism which passes with many for true religion, and which, never applied to the practical affairs of this world, grows rank and foul side by side with the truth it vainly seeks to copy,—in this the book before us abounds, being thus admirably suited to the taste of a people who mistook sentiment for religion, fancies for facts, and of information of every kind were always sadly in need.